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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 001120

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA AND EEB

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/10/2018  
TAGS: ETRD ETTC PREL  
SUBJECT: HONDURAS REVIEW OF CUBAN RELATIONS FOR THE  
LIBERTAD ACT

REF: A. SECSTATE 126578  
    1B. TEGUCIGALPA 01018

Classified By: Ambassador Hugo Llorens for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (U) This cable serves as a response to reftel request for  
information on Honduran relations with Cuba.

¶2. (C) Has the host country, in Post's opinion, worked to  
promote the advancement of democracy and human rights in Cuba?

The Government of Honduras does not appear to exert political  
influence over Cuba, including on democracy and human rights  
issues.

¶3. (C) Has the host country made public statements or  
undertaken other governmental actions, such as resolutions in  
the  
national assemblies condemning human rights abuses in Cuba;  
or actions in support of civil society in Cuba through host  
country's diplomatic missions or other fora?

The GOH has not made any statements to this effect.

¶4. (C) Have there been any high-level diplomatic visits  
between Cuba and the host country in the past six months?

- A large delegation of senior GOH officials were on hand  
when Honduras joined Petrocaribe at the fourth summit of the  
club in Cienfuegos, Cuba in December 2007.
- January 2008 - Salvador Jimenez, President of the Honduran  
Olympic Committee, visited Cuba to discuss Cuban assistance  
in the sports field. He signed contracts for 14 experts to  
come to Honduras.
- May 2008 - Cuban attended the V National Tourism Congress  
in Honduras
- May 2008 - ALBA Cumbre Alimentaria was held here in  
Honduras and the Cubans attended
- May 2008 - Karen Zelaya Minister of Honduran Technical  
Cooperation (SETCO) visited Cuba. The first agreement  
between SETCO and MINVEC was signed in February 2007 and this  
was a follow up meeting.
- September 2008 - ALBA signing summit in Honduras attended  
by Carlos Lage

¶5. (C) Did the host country offer or deliver humanitarian or  
other assistance to the Cuban people in the wake of the major  
damage caused by Hurricanes Gustav (August 30) and Ike  
(September 8)?

The GOH flew one plane load (a C-130) of supplies to Cuba  
after Hurricane Ike. We do not know what the shipment  
contained. We are not aware of any other shipments.

¶6. (C) What is the nature of investments (and names, if  
known) that host country businesses have in Cuba? What host  
country businesses participated in the Havana Trade Fair  
(November 3)?

Investment activity between Honduras and Cuba is limited. There is little to no Honduran investment in Cuba. According to the Chamber of Commerce and the Trade Ministry, Honduran companies did not participate in the Havana Trade Fair.

¶7. (C) Are there any bilateral trade agreements or other cooperative agreements between host country and Cuba?

The GOH and Cuba mutually affirmed their commitment in early November 2008 to establish a trade agreement that would cover some commercial issues such as barriers, customs, rules or origin and sanitary issues (reftel B). Senior Trade Negotiator Melvin Redondo told econoff negotiations would start in early 2009 and said press reports that Honduras would open a trade office in Havana were incorrect.

¶8. (C) Are there any exchange programs between host the country and Cuba, including but not limited to: scholarships for host country nationals to study in Cuba; Cuban-paid medical travel for host country nationals; and Cuban doctors working in host country?

Around 300 Cuban doctors arrived in Honduras immediately after Hurricane Mitch in 1998. Cuban doctors have been working here ever since on a rotational basis, and Post periodically learns of the arrival of new groups of 80 to 90 doctors. At any given time, there may be around 300 Cuban doctors in Honduras.

Honduras acceded to ALBA in September 2008 in Tegucigalpa, and the adhesion agreement included the provision of the

following exchanges, scholarships and services with Cuba, all of which except light bulbs may already have existed before ALBA:

- Increase medical cooperation in Honduras through which thousands of Cuban doctors and technicians have completed Honduran service, as part of the Integrated Health Program (Programa Integral de Salud).
- Provide 80 scholarships for Honduran students to study medical, humanities and science and technology specialties in Cuba;
- Support for the Energy Saving Program of Honduras, by replacing 4 million incandescent light bulbs with energy saving bulbs with the participation of social workers and assessors from the Ministry of Basic Industry in Cuba (Note: This program is in full swing, and public advertisements invite Hondurans report to various locales around the country to trade in their light bulbs. End Note)
- Broadening of the Massive Literacy Program "Yes I Can," through which Cuba has already placed teachers in 206 Honduran municipalities.
- Attend to the GOH application for needed generic medications through Cuban pharmaceutical industry.

LLORENS